



Environmental regulation fact sheet

Abattoir

This fact sheet provides guidance on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's administration of licences and works approvals for abattoirs.

The Department regulates abattoirs under Part V of the [Environmental Protection Act 1986](#) (EP Act). Sites where an activity listed in Schedule 1 of the [Environmental Protection Regulations 1987](#) (EP Regulations) is carried out at, or above, the specified production or design capacity are prescribed premises which require a works approval for construction and either a licence or registration to operate.

Category 15 of the EP Regulations describes abattoirs as prescribed premises:

Category 15: Abattoir

Description of category	Production or design capacity
Category 15	
Abattoir: Premises on which animals are slaughtered.	1,000 tonnes or more per year

Application

Category 15 covers the slaughter of any animal species for human or animal consumption in an abattoir facility including but not limited to: Cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and poultry.

Production and design capacity

The classification of an abattoir as a prescribed premises under Category 15 is determined by its production or design capacity, measured in tonnes of liveweight animals processed per year. The terms 'production capacity' and 'design capacity' are not defined in the EP Act or EP Regulations. The [Guideline: Industry regulation guide to licensing](#) provides general guidance. The Department considers:

- Production capacity is the rate at which a product is made as relevant to the description of the prescribed premises category.
- Design capacity is the maximum the facility or equipment is designed to receive, handle, process, contain or emit as relevant to the description of the prescribed premises category.

In cases where a business can demonstrate an abattoir's operation is genuinely restricted, such as by planning approval conditions, the Department may consider the production or design capacity to be lower than its actual design capacity. However, factors that are temporary or readily altered such as business decisions, market demand or labour shortages are not considered genuine restrictions for determining an abattoir's production or design capacity exceeds the 1,000 tonnes or more per year threshold for Category 15.



Production/design capacity $\geq 1,000$ tonnes liveweight per year

Abattoirs that are designed and have capacity to process 1,000 tonnes or more of liveweight animals per year are a prescribed premises and subject to licensing requirements under Part V, Division 3 of the EP Act. This includes a works approval for construction or works and a licence for the ongoing operational phase.

Production/design capacity $\leq 1,000$ tonnes liveweight per year

Abattoirs with a production or design capacity of less than 1,000 tonnes of liveweight animals per year are not prescribed premises, do not meet Category 15 and are therefore not subject to licensing under Part V, Division 3 of the EP Act. However:



- Abattoirs with a production or design capacity of more than 100 and less than 1,000 tonnes of liveweight animals per year must comply with the [Environmental Protection \(Abattoirs\) Regulations 2001](#). The abattoir regulations set out requirements relating to control of dust, disposal of dead animals (not slaughtered), drainage and the collection of waste materials and wastewater treatment.
- Abattoirs with a production or design capacity of less than 100 tonnes of liveweight animals per year are not directly regulated but must still comply with the general provisions of the EP Act, and Environmental Protection (Unauthorised Discharges) Regulations 2004 such as those regarding unauthorised discharges, pollution and environmental harm. They may also require other approvals from the Department or decision-making authorities on matters such as native vegetation clearing or groundwater abstraction.

Environmental risk

Abattoirs may cause pollution or environmental harm unless they are appropriately regulated and managed. The EP Act sets out a range of offences relating to occupiers of prescribed premises in addition to general offences relating to pollution and environmental harm. For further information on these offences, refer to [Guideline: Industry regulation guide to licensing](#) and the EP Act. Emissions and discharges from abattoirs include:

- odour
- solid and liquid wastes (such as manure, salt and brine waste, blood, paunch and offal, washdown water)
- potentially contaminated stormwater
- noise



- biogas
- dust (from the movement of vehicles or animals and so on).

Assessment

The Department applies a risk-based approach to its regulatory functions under the EP Act. Details on the assessment of applications for works approvals and licences can be found in [Guidance statement: Decision-making](#) and [Guidance statement: Risk assessments](#).

In assessing applications for Category 15 premises, the Department will assess emissions and discharges from the primary abattoir activity and infrastructure, including any directly related activities including:



- lairage yards
- abattoir buildings
- waste treatment and storage areas and their use (including activities producing wastes, such as rendering or fellmongery) and wastewater treatment systems
- wastewater irrigation and solid waste application areas.

The Department will consult with local government authorities and the Department of Health about approvals for the treatment and disposal/irrigation of liquid waste.

Where a prescribed premises has been assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority as a significant proposal and is subject to a Ministerial Statement granted under Part IV of the EP Act, the conditions of a works approval or licence granted under Part V must not be contrary to the conditions of the Ministerial Statement.

More information

Contact Environmental Regulation on 6364 7000 or info@dwer.wa.gov.au for more details. This document is available in alternative formats and languages on request. Other industry regulation publications are available at [DWER Regulatory documents](#).

Legislation

This document is provided for guidance only. It should not be relied upon to address every aspect of the relevant legislation. Please refer to legislation.wa.gov.au for electronic copies of the relevant legislation.

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